

Chair Alex Marszalkowski
House Finance Committee
Subcommittee on General Government
Rhode Island State House



April 7, 2026

RE: Testimony in support of Governor's Proposed FY27 Budget, Executive Office of Housing

Dear Chair Marszalkowski and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's proposed FY27 budget related to the Office of Housing. **We write in support of the \$100,000 allocation for Sojourner House and urge you to maintain at least this level of funding and consider increasing it to \$500,000.**

Sojourner House is a statewide nonprofit organization that has provided housing and wraparound services to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking for nearly 50 years. Since our founding in 1976, we have served more than 60,000 survivors on their journey to safety and stability, and last year alone we supported over 5,000 Rhode Islanders in crisis.

Last year's \$100,000 General Assembly investment in Sojourner House directly supported our housing programs for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. With this funding, we helped provide stable housing and wraparound services to survivors and their children, contributing to the 138,844 bed nights we offered and the more than 600 clients (including children) we housed in 2025. This flexible state support allowed us to sustain and expand permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and transitional units within the 175+ units we now own or lease statewide.

Unfortunately, the need we are meeting continues to grow. In 2025, Sojourner House provided 56,420 services and supported more than 5,000 Rhode Islanders in crisis, with nearly two-thirds of our clients homeless at intake. **Despite our scale, we were still unable to meet the housing needs of 95% of people who called our hotline seeking housing in FY25, leaving 1,238 Rhode Islanders without the life-saving support they needed.** In the context of Rhode Island's affordable housing shortage and rising homelessness, survivors with damaged credit, limited savings, and urgent safety needs have few safe options other than providers like Sojourner House.

The proposed state investment is also a smart fiscal strategy, allowing Rhode Island to leverage significant federal resources and reduce pressure on other systems. The separate \$500,000 allocation request filed by Representative Casey would enable Sojourner House to house and support an estimated 70 adults and 127 children, while unlocking an additional \$1.5 million in HUD funding through federal grant matching requirements. By stabilizing families and preventing DCYF involvement and costly out-of-home placements, this investment would save the state an estimated \$18 million, while helping Rhode Island advance the goals of the 2030 Housing Plan.

We urge you to maintain at least the \$100,000 in the House FY27 budget proposal and consider increasing the amount to \$500,000 to help Sojourner House ensure safer futures for survivors and their families.